

The History Corner with Danny Beatty.



Danny

This picture was taken at Pass Lake in the late 70s.

Seated is Ken Jacot, Charter member.

Emory Harrison (deceased) has his back to us.

Bob Whitney is on the right, also a Charter member

Ken is working on the creel census the club did in those days.



Back in 1939 Pass Lake was restricted to the use of fly only, the first such regulation to be made by the Game Commission of Washington. The fly fishing only regulation was rescinded in 1955 which continued to 1965 when it was once again designated for fly fishing only. Louie Corbin told me he fished Pass Lake on every opening day from the 1930s. This tradition was not altered during the ten years the lake was not fly fishing only nor when it was designated for year around fishing. Louie just picked the weekend for the normal opening in April and called it his "Opening Day at Pass Lake". About 1960 Louie took this picture of the opening day crowd.

Danny

PASS LAKE'S FLY FISHING HISTORY

I



I have been accumulating Pass Lake History for about forty years. I have books, papers, pictures, conversations and oral histories which should be of interest to fly fishers for years to come. Most of this is now shared with the Fly Fishing Collection at Western Washington University.

Pass Lake was the first lake in Washington to be designated for fly fishing only when on January 9, 1940 the Washington Game Commission adopted a resolution from the fairly new (1939) Washington Fly Fishing Club (WFFC) of Seattle.

Key members of the club who were responsible for pursuing the regulation included Enos Bradner, Ken McLeod and Letcher Lambuth. The regulation also included Fly Fishing Only for fishing steelhead on the NF Stillaguamish. For the next 35 years the WFFC maintained a key interest in continuing the fly only regulation. However the regulations did change in 1955 when other clubs, more interested in returning the lake to general lowland lake seasons, were successful. So for ten years Pass Lake did not have the fly only requirement though some of the local long time fly fishers such as Louie Corbin, Russ Willis and Warren Erholm continued to fish only with flies. I was not aware of this fly only history when I first fished Pass Lake in 1956, my first season after coming to Anacortes in September 1955. During the ten years of standard seasons, fly clubs were being formed in Everett and Seattle that formed a coalition to once again work toward returning to fly fishing only.

The 1950 Copyright First Edition of Enos Bradner's book, Northwest Angling, has a picture of Bradner standing by the roadside barrier constructed of logs with rock supports built by the CCC. He is holding two large Pass Lake trout. Bradner is given much of the credit for the original idea to make Pass Lake fly fishing only.



I do not have that picture available so will substitute this picture of Louie Corbin which was taken during the same time frame. Notice the size and the square tail of the larger fish. Brown trout were planted in Pass Lake in the 1930s and, though I have no proof, this picture might be one of those Brown trout. The picture is looking south toward the alders near the present day launch area.

Corbin told me that the access to Pass Lake for boats on trailers was a small area at the north end of the logs with rock support highway barrier that you see curving along the lake shore. Remember, the road you see in this picture was not there until

Deception Pass Bridge was built in the mid 1930s. The way to Pass Lake from Anacortes was on Rosario Road which ended at Cougar Gap. It was not until after WWII when County commissioner Wallace Sharpe got the support of the other commissioners to extend Rosario Road to the intersection with Highway 20. Yes, Commissioner Sharpe was a member of the family after which there is now Sharpe Road, Sharpe's Corner (Hwy 20 and 20 Spur) and Sharpe County Park.

Extending Rosario Road to now Highway 20 proved to be difficult where the Pass lake outlet stream is covered for the launch/parking area and the road bed. Looking south from where the culvert starts you will notice that the amount of fill is significant. Gil Hull, who was interested in the history of Pass Lake and surroundings, wrote that large rocks were dumped in the waters edge and seemed to just sink and disappear. The outlet area was rather boggy. This culvert and fill did raise the lake level somewhat which proved to be helpful for other lake uses.

Danny

PASS LAKE'S FLY FISHING HISTORY

II

The Game Department did a rotenone treatment of Pass Lake in 1946. After the treatment Cutthroat trout were planted. Their growth over the next few years created a trophy fishery for fly fishers.

In 1947 Russ Willis, long time Fidalgo member and his partner Duane Genung, bought 20 cedar rowboats and set up a rental on the then Heilman property. The rowboats were made by a boat builder in the Lyman/Hamilton area and cost between \$35-50 each. Willis and Genung wanted to buy some property close to the highway but Heilman was not interested in selling. Instead they got a three year lease on property east of the Heilman house.

They were allowed use of the pump house to store oars etc. and build a dock for the boats. Russ also used the pump house to tie flies which were sold to the fishers. He also learned how to splice fly lines for which he charged a fee. Sink tip or other floating/sinking fly line combinations were not available from the fly line companies. It was a seven step process to meld a sinking section to the floating line. Duane Genung's business card:

PASS LAKE - A FLY FISHERMAN'S PARADISE
Pass Lake Boathouse
Boats for Fishermen



This picture of Kathy Heilman, taken about 1949, shows the dock and a string of cutthroat. Catch limits in those days were large as other pictures in my collection indicate. Russ and Duane ran the "resort" from late April to late September. Total boat rental for the season of 1949 was \$1200. Two hours for \$1.00 and \$2.00 for all day. "On many days early in the season and later in the season, just before deer season, all the boats would be on the lake." According to a page Russ wrote to summarize the season. Largest fish noted was 26". By the end of the

season, previous year's plants were already 14"-17" which are shown in the picture. "The great bulk of the fish caught were taken by trolling deep & also quite a few casting & letting the fly sink before retrieving" The small building Russ referred to as the pump house was for the Heilman's irrigation system pump to water the fields for pasture and hay.

In a story, written by Gil Hull, the "pump house" was originally built in the mid 1800s as a telegraph relay station. It is an interesting story that connects Telegraph Slough (near the Farmhouse), Telegraph Bight (near Biz Point), Telegraph Bay and other telegraph names across the islands and up the B.C.

coast. (If there is interest in this story, I may be able to find it in my papers.) Willis and Genung gave up the boat rental business after three years and turned it over to the Heilman family. It has been many years since I last saw the remaining boat upside down below their (now ranger) house.

An even longer and greater use of Pass Lake water was the building of a Department of Fisheries Experimental Station and Hatchery at Bowman Bay. All that remain of the experimental station/hatchery are the dock that extends into Bowman Bay and brick duplex located on the north side of the field. The station was a long, low building situated north of the dock along and parallel to the small creek. Some circular concrete ponds were on the field side of the shoreline which had salt water circulating. These small ponds were for salt water shore creatures and a favorite for visiting families.

Fresh water for the small hatchery associated with the experimental station came from Pass Lake. The large block of concrete you see by the picnic table at the launch site was the base for the pump. A log framework extended into Pass Lake which supported the pipes. This framework and pipe were not removed when the station closed and remain under water to this time. A picture of the framework is shown in the club's web page history section. Look closely next to the concrete support and you will see a section of the large pipe.

The daughter of the last experimental station/hatchery manager was in my science class. I got to know her father and that led to taking my science classes on field trips for the some marine biology.

Danny

PASS LAKE'S FLY FISHING HISTORY

III

A July 1946 letter from the Department of Game Assistant Chief Fisheries Biologist, Robert Meigs, to the Washington Fly Fishing Club (WFFC) explains that the poisoning of Pass Lake was scheduled due to a "heavy population of perch". The other reason was based on the future building of the Department of Fisheries Hatchery/Research Station at Bowman Bay. After the hatchery was in use, rotenone poisoning could not be done. Meigs went on to write that if cutthroat are available they will be used for the plant when the lake cleans up.*

The next planting information I have starts in 1950 with a Cutthroat plant of 17,530 and increases each year with Cutthroat until 1954 when the plant was 65,000. From 1955 to 1973 the plants were all Rainbow with the number from a low of 6325 in 1972 to a high of 81,000 in 1960. The size of the fry planted also varied but the size (length) is only shown for two years.

During these years Pass Lake was like most other lowland lakes and was managed as a "put and take" fishery. Ever since Pass Lake was fly fishing only in 1940, there was effort by the Washington Sportsmen Council to return it to "normal" lowland lake regulations. The Council was made up of many sportsmen clubs across the state. Clubs in Skagit County included Wildcat Steelhead Club (Sedro Woolley), Hub Sportsmen Club (Burlington) and Sunset Sportsmen Club (Anacortes).



The Sport Councils arguments against fly fishing only were that it was elitist and discriminated against boys and older men. The council prevailed in 1955 and Pass Lake returned to standard lowland lake regulations. Because of the change the WFFC stopped having their annual opening day outing at Pass Lake.

This picture was taken in 1953. I have other pictures similar to this picture and the one with Kathy (History II) that show similar numbers of fish. A twelve fish creel limit in those days was the norm. Pass Lake is known as a very productive lake for the west side of the Cascades. For anglers to have these large limits the Department of Game heavily planted the lakes. The stocking of Pass Lake from 1950 to 1967 was an average of 35,700 each year. These plants were made up of fish that went from 43 to the pound to 70 to the pound. To get these tiny fish to reach a legal retention size by the next season required a healthy food source. In 1956 the Puget Sound Fly Fishers was formed in Tacoma and the Evergreen Fly fishing Club was formed in Everett. The WFFC brought members of these Puget Sound clubs together and formed a coalition that worked to lobby the Game Commission for returning Pass Lake to fly fishing only. They were successful and in 1965 the Commission voted to return Pass Lake to fly fishing only. The WFFC returned to having their opening day outings at Pass Lake. These outings included camping at Bowman Bay and a Saturday evening steak feed .

In 1969 a new threat was disclosed by an article written by Steve Raymond in the Seattle Times. "A real-estate developer had announced plans to purchase private land surrounding the northern half of the lake and build condominiums and town houses, a motel, a golf driving range and a bowling alley." (Backcasts - A History or the Washington Fly Fishing Club). The Save Pass Lake Committee

was formed which went to work to find a way the Pass Lake property could be acquired and preserved for public use. The WFFC, along with the other Puget Sound Clubs which now included the Alpine Fly Fishers and the Olympic Fly Fishers, urged Governor Dan Evans support funding the state purchase of the property. Another approach was to get the Skagit County Commissioners to vote against rezoning the land. Lew Bell, member of the Evergreen Fly fishing Club, was a key person in saving the land around the north end of Pass Lake. I asked Steve Raymond to tell the story in his words.

"Lew was chairman of the state Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation in 1970, when the Pass Lake controversy was at its height. The IAC, as it was known, was made up of representatives of several state agencies, as its name suggests. Lew, I think, was a representative of the public at large. The IAC's job was to parcel out money appropriated by the Legislature for outdoor recreation projects it considered worthy. The Save Pass Lake Committee, a grass-roots organization that was formed after I wrote the article about the proposed real-estate development on the lake, lobbied the State Parks and Recreation Commission to vote in favor of acquiring the Heilman property if the money to buy it could be raised. It agreed, and after that the Save Pass Lake group started lobbying the IAC for the money. I was involved behind the scenes in both efforts.

I didn't know Lew then, but I did know he was a member of the Evergreen Fly Fishers, so I thought he would be friendly to our efforts. I called him, introduced myself over the phone, and urged him to do what he could to get the IAC to appropriate the money to buy the Heilman property. I wasn't privy to the internal debates of the IAC members, but Lewis was able to convince them to make the appropriation, and that's how the property was purchased and conveyed to state parks."

The legislature appropriated funds for the purchase. The owners were allowed to live in the home until no longer needed. For more personal family information on this segment of Pass lake History, you should read Kathy Heilman Brown's oral history (see Pass Lake History II for the web site).

Lew Bell was elected president of the Federation at the Sun Valley Conclave in 1970. He saw the value of regional/local organizing of fly fishing clubs and divided the Federation in six councils across the United States and Canada.

To continue the information on fish plants that goes from 1968 to 1976. The 1969 plant was 40,000 rainbows, 50 to the pound. That dropped to 5,000 in 1974. The average for those years was 18,600 or close to one half the previous groups of years.

Bruce Freet explains the fish size relative to the number per pound.

"When 200 fish per pound are stocked, they average about 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches long. 50 fish per pound will average 3 to 3 1/2 inches long; however, the larger fish will have much better survivorship and grow to 12 inches in a year at Pass Lake. Timing is also critical depending upon whether they are spring, summer, or fall spawners."

This explanation helps us understand why fish plants through the 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s resulted in what the Game Department considered a nice catch retention size fish by opening day the following year.

The length of lowland lake fishing seasons during the 1960s and 1970s varied from lake to lake. As an example, the Washington Department of Game's 1971 Game Fish Seasons' brochure stated that Pass Lake was open April 18 to June 30 and September 1 to November 30. This added month in the fall for Pass Lake came about as a result of the WFFC asking the Commission to extend the season. That year (1971) Erie and Hart Lake season was April 18 to July 31. Russ Willis wrote in his 1949 notes on Pass Lake "All boats out early spring and just before deer season on Sundays". This would indicate Pass Lake had a history of "summer doldrums".

***Of interest to fly fishers today is that the Fly Fishing Only designation has always been determined by the Commission. Another paragraph by Robert Meigs' July 25, 1946 letter states:**

"Whether or not Pass Lake will remain on the list of waters restricted to fly fishing only is a matter which lies entirely in the hands of the Game Commission (now the Fish and Wildlife Commission) - - not the Biologists."

Again, note that Pass Lake had returned to normal lowland lake regulations for ten years from 1956 to 1965. It was the concerted effort of fly fishers, fly fishing clubs and members of the community that brought about the changes that brought Pass Lake to fly fishing only, owned by the state and the surrounding land under the control of state parks.



Pictures of Pass Lake catch in 1953. There was a twelve fish limit during those years with most fish planted the previous year.

Of interest to me is the clothing of the man with striped overalls, white shirt, Fedora style hat and a tie. Had he arrived at the lake in his business suit and pulled the overalls on to cover and protect the suit pants?

Danny

PASS LAKE'S FLY FISHING HISTORY IV

On December 19, 1974 a group of Anacortes fly fishers gathered at Danny Coleman's home to formulate the organization of a fly fishing club. The club's history on the web site explains how Errol Champion (NW Federation Council President), Ed Foss (Council Secretary/Treasurer) and Bob Strobel met earlier in the month with local fly fishers to offer their support. Ed Foss and Errol Champion were members of the Washington Fly Fishing Club (WFFC) and had brought their club's bylaws and other papers to the previous meeting which offered ideas and methods of getting the club up and running. Errol went on to be the Federation of Fly Fishers (Federation) treasurer and president. Ed was very involved with the sea-run cutthroat coalition.

At the December 19th meeting Danny Coleman was elected president and continued his membership for about ten years. Dale Elliott was elected vice president and remained in the club until his death about thirty-five years later. Dale suggested the club be called the Fidalgo Fly Fishermen which the group approved. Danny Beatty was elected secretary/treasurer and continues his membership in the Fidalgo Fly Fishers. Other fly fishers were soon added as we talked to our fly fishing friends.

From the beginnings of the club's formation, Pass Lake was a topic of discussion and involvement. We knew about how the WFFC first petitioned the Game Commission to have Pass Lake fly fishing only. We also knew some "old timers" who had fished Pass Lake when it had larger fish. Three of these men (Emory Harrison, Russ Willis and Louis Corbin) eventually joined the club.

On March 8, 1975 Danny Beatty and Danny Coleman met Charles Gold and Ralph Wahl in Burlington and rode with them to Fife for the NW Council Meeting of the Federation of Fly Fishers. At that meeting and from then on, when Fidalgo members attended such events, Pass Lake was always a topic of discussion.

The Council Meeting and the ride down and back prompted Danny Beatty to write the following report in the March 20, 1975 club meeting minutes. "Is the

club interested in doing some research on Pass Lake? I could fill a half page on what I learned at the meeting and on the way home about Pass Lake. Rainbow brood stock, Vibert boxes, Quality waters, etc. I took notes on comments by Enos Bradner and Ralph Wahl on Pass Lake. Ralph has kept a fishing diary since 1939 and will share it if we are interested." Doug Fletcher, Game Department Biologist, and Jim Aggergaard, local Wildlife Agent attended that March 20th meeting. Doug presented the program on fish populations and the problems of illegal plantings. He went on to talk about Pass Lake and changing species which prompted much discussion. "Doug felt that the present method of planting rainbows meets the high pressure and demand of fishers now. Lakes of Fidalgo Island have high productivity for Western Washington and rainbows better utilize the zooplankton present in the lakes." He would welcome the club's involvement of creel checks and attitudes of fishers.

Three Pass Lake projects were planned for the club's first spring - 1975. The first project, headed up by Dale Elliott was the placement of a large sign from the Federation explaining the fly fishing only regulations for Pass Lake. The second project was a work party to clean up the lake's shoreline and roadsides. These projects were completed on April 12, 1975. It was reported that Deception Pass State Park personnel furnished a pickup and hauled away two loads of litter.



Danny Coleman Jim Aggergaard Marvin Elliott

On the April 20, 1975 Opening Day, Fidalgo members were at Pass Lake to do the creel census instead of fishing. The 1975 Creel Census Operation with left to right - Danny Coleman, Jim Aggergaard and Marvin Elliott were part of that crew. Jim Aggergaard was the Game Protector and lives in Anacortes. He often attended club meetings and

projects such as you see here. His interest was also helpful when contacting other Game Department personnel. (Picture by Robin LaRue)

Danny Coleman was asked by the NW Council President, Errol Champion, to be the chairman of a Pass Lake Committee which would work toward improving the quality of fishing. Danny and others developed a questionnaire which was circulated to members of the Fidalgo Fly Fishermen and other area

fly club's members. By a large majority, those fly fishers that filled out the questionnaire were in favor of having the chance to catch a larger fish even if that resulted in an overall fewer fish available. Sample of the questionnaire: I would like to see Pass Lake regulated as Quality Water: Yes 52 No 19

During the years that the WFFC and other clubs were advocating that Pass and other lakes have lower creel limits was a fishing regulation pertaining to creel limits. At the club's April 17, 1975 meeting it came up again when Wildlife Agent Jim Aggergaard informed us that "fish brought to the boat or net and released must be counted as part of the bag limit and will be enforced".

With the backing of the NW Council, the results of the questionnaire and possible Naivete, Ken Jacot and Danny Beatty traveled to Alderbrook at the south end of Hood Canal on August 20, 1975 for the Game Commission's meeting. Danny presented a paper to the Commission stating that Pass Lake should be changed to Quality Water status. The commission was respectful and asked for further study.

On September 18, 1975 the club did the second opening creel census. Game Department biologists were present. A new, more complete questionnaire was handed out. (Of interest to me as I remember these questionnaires, the first one was done with the spirit duplicator method; the second (and much easier to read) was done with mimeograph method.) By the club's October 1975 meeting, approximately 600 questionnaires had been sent to the entire Puget Sound fly fishing clubs and area sporting goods stores. By the January 1976 board meeting, 208 returned survey forms were analyzed and the results were overwhelmingly (86%) in favor of changing Pass Lake to Quality Water regulations.

Jim Johnston, Director of Research in Fisheries Management Division of the Game Department presented the program at the January 15, 1976 meeting of the Fidalgo Fly Fishers. After his program and while discussing the Pass Lake project, Jim commented that - "Letters written to state or federal agencies should be well thought out and not emotional. If this is done they (the letters) will be read and will have influence on the agency."

The March 18, 1976 Fidalgo Fly Fishermen's club meeting received a report from Dan Coleman that he had been in contact with Doug Fletcher and was pleased to report the biologist's surveys showed the Pass lake fish to be $\frac{3}{4}$ inch longer than the previous year. He also asked the club to do an opening day creel census from dawn to dusk.

Another Pass Lake Cleanup work party was held on March 27, 1976 fourteen

of the club's members with Dave Rice the leader, again filled a pickup load of trash from around Pass Lake.



This is an example of an early clean up effort. From left

- ◆ Ken Jacot (white turtleneck)
- Danny Beatty (behind Ken's shoulder)
- Dale Elliott

(white stocking cap) Robin LaRue (plaid jacket) Danny Coleman (black hat) Dave Rice (kneeling left) Marvin Elliott (kneeling right) Most of the club members attended.

Doug Fletcher attended the April 1, 1976 Executive Board meeting. He explained some of his concerns about changing Pass Lake to Quality Water. With the reduced plant in 1975, the growth rate only increased $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, still below the twelve inch minimum hoped for. He said there was not any cutthroat in the test netting he conducted earlier in March. Doug has looked into other strains of rainbow and cutthroat trout to get greater growth.

On April 3, 1976 Danny Beatty, Danny Coleman and Robin LaRue attended the Federation's NW Council meeting. They gave a progress report on efforts to get the Game Commission to change Pass Lake regulations to Quality Water. Their report was well received and the council clubs continued to support the effort.

The late April 1976 Opening Day at Pass Lake received the VIP treatment! Brad O'Conner outdoor editor for the Seattle Times featured Dale Elliot and Ken Jacot in the write up about the creel census. O'Conner interviewed Dale and Ken early Sunday morning as part of his tour of popular lakes in Island and Skagit Counties. Gordy Young, WFFC member and Federation Senior Advisor, was on the lake that day and as his creel was checked remarked that

it was his most delightful opener in many years. Doug Fletcher, District Fish Biologist, and Larry Lennox stopped by about noon to check on how things were going. Lennox was gathering information for the department's Public Information Office. Doug was pleased with the way the creel census was being conducted. Later in the afternoon, Cliff Millenbach, Chief of Game Fisheries, came to get a first hand view of the Pass Lake fishing. Club members checked 281 fishers with 515 rainbow and 43 cutthroat for a 1.99 fish per angler average. With the 190 reported released fish included, the catch was 2.66 per angler. The rainbow averaged 11.9 inches and the cutthroat 10.3 inches, which was a marked length increase over 1975.

On July 7, 1976, Doug Fletcher once again returned to Anacortes to meet with the club's Executive Board and other interested members with his position with regard to changing Pass Lake regulations to Quality Water. The following is taken directly from the July 1976 club newsletter.

"In a six page report to the State Game Department, Doug outlined his position on any changes in regulations. His recommendation is not to change the regulations at Pass Lake for at least one more year. He has reduced the planting level into Pass Lake by another 5,000 rainbow fingerlings which has the reduced planting level from 30,000 two years ago to 20,000 this year. In 1974 30,000 rainbow were planted; in 1975 20,000 rainbow and 5,000 cutthroat; and in 1976 15,000 rainbow and 5,000 cutthroat. The cutthroat were planted at the request of the Fidalgo club. Doug further stated that to make the change to 12 inch minimum, 80% of the fish must reach that length by opening day 1977. He used the data which the club has collected the past two years to show increased growth rate and also to show fisher hours per fish caught. His report also included the questionnaire prepared by the club." From the same newsletter the club did not fully accept the recommendation because Danny Beatty and Ken Jacot prepared a statement asking for the regulation change which was to be presented to the Game Commission on August 30, 1976. Danny had also prepared a histogram of all the creel census data on a large sheet of tag board. He had taken this to the Federation Council meeting and to the meetings with Doug Fletcher. Danny Beatty, Ken Jacot, Danny Coleman and Russ Willis wrote the position paper for the regulation change and had sent it to Game Department Commission members and Department officials. But by the Thursday, July 15, 1976 membership meeting there was some concern over making the presentation to the Game Commission. Doug Fletcher had proposed waiting one more year before making the change to Quality Water. A motion was made and passed that Danny Beatty and Ken Jacot contact the Federation council's officers for their input. We continued to make these necessary contacts which resulted in a final decision to go ahead and attend the Commission meeting and speak to the change during the public hearing session. Since all of the key attendees

had received the position paper our efforts will mainly be to reaffirm our stand.

After eighteen months of continued club members work at the creel census, cleanups, Game Department contacts, questionnaires, visual aids, and with much club and council support the Game Department commissioners approved changing the fly fishing only regulation for Pass Lake to Fly Fishing Only Quality Water with a three fish, twelve inch minimum creel limit. We asked for barbless hooks but the commission members thought that it would be too much for the time being. While the issue of what constitutes a "controlled" or landed fish was not fully changed, it was accepted that released fish would not count in the three fish creel limit.

[Review & Edits: Ken Jacot and Robin LaRue](#)

PASS LAKE'S FLY FISHING HISTORY

V

From 1940 to 1976 fishing regulations for Pass Lake had gone through many changes. There was also a movement advocating catch and release (C&R) which fit in with the quality water designation. One of the stories I would hear about C&R came out of Yellowstone Park in the 1970s. Rangers had noticed the trash cans around Fishing Bridge contained many dead trout. People would catch fish and as they left the area, would drop the fish in the cans. I asked Yellowstone Park historian Paul Schullery about this story. Paul sent me a more detailed account.

"The question about Yellowstone fisheries management requires a longer answer. The story you describe, of "the Yellowstone Park Ranger" finding dead fish and the park consequently deciding to change the fishing regulations, is a highly simplistic, almost folkloric, version of what happened. You know how these stories change as they move from person to person - after a while they become wishfully idealized versions of what actually happened." (I'm placing Paul's complete answer at the end of this essay.) .

The Federation of Fly Fishers (Federation) was one of the early organizations that promoted C&R. Lee Wulff stated that a good fish is too valuable to be caught only once. The Southwest Council of the Federation made a patch which stated "Limit your Kill Don't Kill Your Limit". I have a hat pin that states "Release Them Alive". Along with the idea of C&R was educating fishers on the proper release of the fish. All of these ideas were discussed by Fidalgo Fly Fishermen club members at meetings and with the local Washington State Game Department fish biologists. One of the Game Department projects that the club members were involved with during this time was collecting and tagging Searun Cutthroat. Biologists were documenting Searun Cutthroat to establish their movements in and out of the rivers and their spawning cycles. Fly fishers were asked to catch the fish because the use of a fly resulted in a released fish having a greater chance of survival. The overall project resulted in the Searun regulations that continue to this time. .

At the October 20, 1977 Fidalgo Fly Fishermen's club meeting, Lee Abramson made a motion that the club submits a resolution to the Game Department for barbless hooks on Pass Lake. The motion was seconded, passed and carried. The resolution was submitted to the Game Department but at this time I do not have information as to when the C&R regulation was adopted for Pass Lake. .

Robin LaRue was club president during 1977. The club's newsletter and minutes for that year show that he had meetings with the Washington State Game Department fish biologist Tom Williams. They also tell about Tom Williams and Jim Aggergaard attending some of the meetings. Club members volunteered for other game fish related projects (see above) which continued the association with the department staff. Fidalgo Fly Fishermen members did the Pass Lake clean up and creel census in 1977. The average length of the fish on April 17th opening day was 13.3 inches. The largest cutthroat was 15.8 inches and the largest rainbow was 20 inches. Bob Whitney, census chairman, reported "That people from all around the state are for the Quality Water Regulation". .

With the regulation change to Quality Water, the regulation for a split season continued. The club planned an overnight outing at the park for the September 10th second opening with another creel census being taken by club members. Our records do not show the results of that census. .

The April 16, 1978 opening day creel census showed some difficult to understand results. Of the 366 fish reported caught, only 21 were kept. The catch rate, 6.1 fish per fisher, was higher than in the past two years but the average fish length was smaller. In the July 1978 Wahoo (club newsletter) I wrote: .

"PASS LAKE - Everywhere we go, people are asking about Pass Lake. 'How was the fishing this year?' They say that they heard this or that but want to know exactly what the Fidalgo club members think is happening. Those (club members) that were in attendance at the May meeting were pleased to hear that Tom Williams, Game Department Biologist, recommended a decrease in the plant at Pass Lake. The creel census taken by the Fidalgo Club as well as conversations with the fishers indicated that most anglers caught lots of fish but most of them were under the twelve inch size limit. Pass Lake as someone put it, was a 'tremendous catch and release fishery this year'. We are pleased that Tom is working to develop Pass Lake into a good quality waters lake." .

Finally, at the September 21, 1978 meeting, Tom Williams supplied information that explained why the fish had not grown to the twelve inch and greater size. Secretary Mike Loyd's minutes for that meeting state: "Fall opener @ Pass Lake - Tom Williams says it was over planted (by) 6,000 cutthroat & 10,000 to 12,000 rainbow. He was promptly fined by the Gillie." .

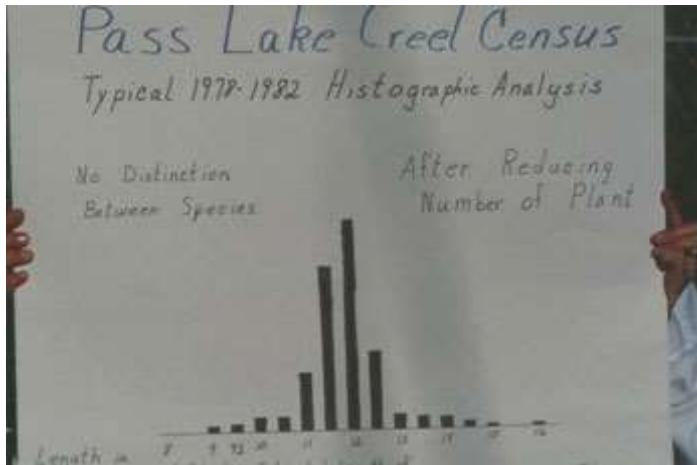
By the end of 1978, after four years of the Fidalgo Fly Fishers' involvement with the Pass Lake fishery, much had been accomplished and learned with much more to come in the next years. .

Danny Beatty.

Below is Paul Schullery's answer to the question about the "Fishing Bridge" situation. .

"What really happened is much more involved, as it had to be. Yellowstone National Park fishing regulations have evolved intermittently from the park's earliest days. Here are two vivid examples from the many stages in this process: as early as 1908 park managers resolved not to introduce any new non-native species in the park; and in 1950 the Firehole and Madison became fly-fishing only. The changing of fishing regulations tended to happen piece by piece, and was usually a response to various forces, including general public attitudes, special-interest pressure (i.e., anglers wanting a different experience than in the past), and the ongoing scientific study of aquatic ecosystems that led to improved understanding of how the rivers and lakes actually worked ecologically. I will include some references that describe the history of fisheries management in Yellowstone National Park. .

So here's the really short version of the history. During the whole period between 1872 and 1960, regulations slowly changed. Of course, creel limits had been reduced repeatedly, but by 1960 it was known that the sport fishing harvest was still too heavy for the fish populations in many waters to sustain



themselves (this was especially the case in Yellowstone Lake, it being the premier park fishery of greatest interest to the most visitors). .

In the case of the fishing regulations for Fishing Bridge/Yellowstone Lake/Yellowstone River, by the 1960s the National Park

Service was already encouraging what at the time was known as "fishing for fun," which meant that they tried to convince anglers to voluntarily release most or all of the fish they caught. Some people did, but of course many people (who came from parts of the country where they'd never heard of such a thing) still killed a lot of fish. It was in this period, during the 1960s, that park staff reported that many people who caught trout in Yellowstone Lake brought them back to the campgrounds but, for a variety of reasons, didn't bother to keep or eat them; they just threw them away. The fish were found, in great numbers, in campground garbage cans. It was a huge waste." .

PASS LAKE'S FLY FISHING HISTORY VI

After Pass Lake was regulated with Fly Fishing Only and Quality Waters, the Fidalgo club's efforts continued with twice annual shoreline cleanups, creel census and communication with the Game Department. Creel census data from 1978 to 1982 was compiled and is shown below in a histogram analysis. This analysis was to show the fish size increase after the fish plant numbers were consistently reduced.

The tallest (middle) bar is for twelve inch long fish. The range is from nine to sixteen inches. There was no distinction between species of fish present in the lake.

Discussion of ideas for increasing the fish size centered around the idea that if the fish had a chance to spawn, they could return to the lake and continue to grow. There was concern about the lack of spawning which caused the fish stress and death.

During 1984 the club members set about to develop a spawning channel (stream) across the hayfield to the north of the lake and adjacent to Highway 20. There is a small wetland on the north side of the driveway to the Ranger's house which the stream (ditch/channel) was to tap for more water flow. Permission was received from State Parks and two tractors with backhoes and front loaders were donated to dig the channel.



As far as I can determine we do not know the ownership of the tractors but I think they were from State Parks. When I asked some of the former active members of the club, only Bob Whitney considered he might be one of the operators.

The photo shows the extent of how much earth was moved in digging this "stream". Photos are from slides taken by Harry Dawson



This is a better picture to show the depth of the ditch. Many club members were involved with the project. About where you see the shovel handle showing across the ditch (foreground of the picture) is where a sheet of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood was embedded into the bank to form a dam/barrier. The plywood had a notch in the top/middle which was somewhat accurately calibrated for stream flow measurements. It was at this time that Louie Corbin became interested in the club's efforts to improve Pass Lake fishing prospects.

Louie is the person pictured with the large trout, standing along the Highway 20 guardrail in the first chapter of this fly fishing history. When it was time for someone to make regular visits to the dam and record the flow, Louie volunteered. He lived at Dewey Beach and often fished Pass Lake so for the entire time records were kept; Louie was there two, three or more times each week. After one heavy rainfall Louie reported the dam had been breached. A crew from the club repaired and reinforced the sides to reduce future erosion of the sides.



After the stream was constructed, at least one fish spawned in the channel about 25 yards above the lake. I think it was Ralph Rowland who came to tell me about seeing a spawning cutthroat one evening after he checked the stream on his way home from fishing. I've often wondered if the cutthroat might have been one of the

Sea Run Cutthroat that had been planted in the late 1970s.

Robin LaRue reminded me that the club was looking into more extensive possibilities for increasing the flow of water during the summer/fall dry season. One idea was to contact Puget Power for electricity to run the irrigation pump and circulate water from the lake to the upper end of the stream and back to the lake. When Claire Heilman was farming he had an irrigation system and the pump and pipes were still around the old pump house. Unfortunately that idea never went anywhere.

I contacted Deane Brazas, 1980 Club President, and asked what he remembered from the project. He told me that he and Steve Gerwels stuck alder saplings in the ground along the bank. Now, 30+ years later you can see the line of alders extending diagonally across the field from the Lake to the Ranger's House driveway.

The project was rather short lived. We found that the water flow was not sufficient during the dry months for the cool water needed to maintain the fry if the eggs were to hatch. Sometime during 1984 there was a change in the Game Department's biologist for the area and Jim Johnston took Tom Williams job as District Biologist. Jim decided to use other methods for improving the size of Pass Lake fish and the spawning channel project was discontinued.

In January or February 1984 the creel census reporting system was in operation. 5" x 7" cards were purchased and a station was placed at the information kiosk for the fishers to self report their catch. Louie Corbin continued his efforts by making sure there were always cards in the slot and collecting the cards every month. Club member Mario Richards gave Louie a water thermometer to record the lake's temperature. Louie compiled the monthly report and sent it to biologist Johnston for F&W records. We asked Corbin to become a full member of the club but he declined stating that he "did not enjoy going to meetings". Finally, after some persuasion, we did get Louie to join the club provided he did not attend the introduction meeting nor did he ever have to attend anything more than what the club was doing at

Pass Lake. The club officers and members agreed to this arrangement and Louie Corbin was the only member never to have attended a meeting.

Danny Beatty

Remembrance of Russ Willis



Russ Willis was a member of the Fidalgo Fly Fishers for many years from the 1970s to the 1990s. When Russ retired he and Shirley bought a motor home and became "snowbirds" spending their winters in Arizona and summers where ever there might be some good fly fishing.

Russ was a lifetime fly fisher. He grew up in Sedro Woolley. When he was about 18 years old he hiked into Deer Creek from Lake Cavanaugh to fish for summer run steelhead.

In his W.W.U. Fly Fishing Collection Oral History you will read about his fishing Pass Lake and owning a boat rental in the late 1940s.

His Trophy Fishing article from the club's Wahoo News was written about a large steelhead he caught in 1957. Walter Johnson, Russ's long time friend, also wrote about the steelhead in the November-December 1987 issue of Flyfishing magazine.

At one of the early club outings to Lac Le Jeune Russ hooked a large Kamloops Rainbow. As he played the fish there were a series of exclamations from Russ. WAHOO, WAHOO-OO as he brought the fish to the boat. I was looking for a name for the club's newsletter. That seemed to fit.

So if you thought it had something to do with the large tropical fish or an Indian

Chief from an Ohio tribe then now you know it was the excited reverberating cry of an excited fly fisher.
Danny

Guest post to Danny's corner by Robin Larue



Shortly after the founding of the Fidalgo Fly Fishers, then the Fidalgo Fly Fishermen, the club unofficially adopted Pass Lake as its "Home Waters". Over the year's numerous work parties have been held at Pass Lake. Work Party activities have included removal of embedded large rocks from the boat launch area, painting the outhouse, since replaced, and the information kiosk, and litter cleanup.



The 1976 photograph shows the results of a morning's work. The litter was removed from the launch area and the shoreline adjacent to the State Highway. The second photograph shows another work party in the early 1980's. Click on Photos to enlarge.



Pass Lake Boat Launch

This photograph was taken by Louie Corbin in the late 1960's and shows the float structure that supported the cast iron intake pipe for a pump house, located at the launch ramp area. The pump house supplied lake water to the Washington State Department of Fisheries Hatchery/Research facilities located at Bowman's Bay State Park just north of the lake. When the water

is clear a portion of the pipe can be seen resting on the bottom of the lake. The

**remnants of the concrete foundation are still visible next the picnic table
supplied and installed by the Fidalgo Fly Fishers.**

Robin